Numb. 3

The TATLER.

By *Iſaac Bickerſtaff* Eſq;

Quicquid agunt Homines noſtri Farrago Libelli.

From *Thurſday April* 14. to *Saturday April* 16. 1709.

THO' *the other Papers which are publiſh'd for the Uſe of the good People of* England *have certainly very wholeſom Effects, and are laudable in their particular Kinds; they do not ſeem to come up to the main Deſign of ſuch Narrations, which, I humbly preſume, ſhould be principally intended for the Uſe of Politick Perſons, who are ſo publick-ſpirited as to neglect their own Affairs to look into Tranſactions of State. Now theſe Gentlemen, for the moſt Part, being Perſons of ſtrong Zeal and weak Intellects, It is both a Charitable and Neceſſary Work to offer ſomething, whereby ſuch worthy and well-affected Members of the Commonwealth may be inſtructed, after their Reading,* what to think: *Which ſhall be the End and Purpoſe of this my Paper, wherein I ſhall from Time to Time Report and Conſider all Matters of what Kind ſoever that ſhall occur to Me, and publiſh ſuch my Advices and Reflections every* Tueſday, Thurſday, *and* Saturday, *in the Week, for the Convenience of the Poſt. It is alſo reſolv'd by me to have ſomething which may be of Entertainment to the Fair Sex, in Honour of whom I have taken the Title of this Paper. I therefore earneſtly deſire all Perſons, without Diſtinction, to take it in for the preſent* Gratis, *and hereafter at the Price of one Penny, forbidding all Hawkers to take more for it at their Peril. And I deſire all Perſons to conſider, that I am at a very great Charge for proper Materials for this Work, as well as that before I reſolv'd upon it, I had ſettled a Correſpondence in all Parts of the Known and Knowing World; and foraſmuch as this Globe is not trodden upon by mere Drudges of Buſineſs only, but that Men of Spirit and Genius are juſtly to be eſteem'd as conſiderable Agents in it, we ſhall not upon a Dearth of News preſent you with muſty Foreign Edicts, or dull Proclamations, but ſhall divide our Relation of the Paſſages which occur in Action or Diſcourſe throughout this Town, as well as elſewhere, under ſuch Dates of Places as may prepare you for the Matter you are to expect, in the following Manner:*

All Accounts of Gallantry, Pleaſure, *and* Entertainment, *ſhall be under the Article of* White's Chocolate-houſe; Poetry, *under that of* Will's Coffee-houſe; Learning, *under the Title of* Grecian; Foreign *and* Domeſtick News, *you will have from St.* James's Coffee-houſe; *and what elſe I ſhall on any other Subject offer, ſhall be dated from my own* Apartment.

I once more deſire my Reader to conſider, That as I cannot keep an Ingenious Man to go daily to Will's, *under Two-pence each Day merely for his Charge; to* White's, *under Sixpence; nor to the* Grecian, *without allowing him ſome Plain* Spaniſh, *to be as able as others at the Learned Table; and that a good Obſerver cannot ſpeak with even* Kidney *at St.* James's *without clean Linnen. I ſay, theſe Conſiderations will, I hope, make all Perſons willing to comply with my Humble Requeſt (when my* Gratis *Stock is exhauſted) of a Penny a Piece; eſpecially ſince they are ſure of ſome Proper Amuſement, and that it is impoſſible for me to want Means to entertain 'em, having, beſides the Helps of my own Parts, the Power of Divination, and that I can, by caſting a Figure, tell you all that will happen before it comes to paſs.*

But this laſt Faculty I ſhall uſe very ſparingly, and not ſpeak of any Thing 'till it is paſs'd, for fear of divulging Matters which may offend our Superiors.

Will's Coffee-houſe, April 14.

THis Evening, the Comedy called *The Country Wife*, was acted in *Drury-Lane*, for the Benefit of Mrs. *Bignall*. The Part which gives Name to the Play was perform'd by her ſelf. Through the whole Action, ſhe made a very pretty Figure, and exactly enter'd into the Nature of the Part. Her Husband, in the *Drama*, is repreſented to be one of thoſe Debauchees who run through the Vices of the Town, and believe, when they think fit they can marry, and ſettle at their Eaſe. His own Knowledge of the Iniquity of the Age, makes him chuſe a Wife wholly ignorant of it, and place his Security in her Want of Skill how to abuſe him. The Poet, on many Occaſions, where the Propriety of the Character of the Perſon ſpeaking will admit of it, inſinuates, That there is no Defence againſt Vice, but the Contempt of it: And has, in the natural Ideas of an Untainted Innocent, ſhown the gradual Steps to Ruin and Deſtruction, which Perſons of Condition run into, without the Help of a good Education by which to form their Conduct. The Torment of a Jealous Coxcomb, which ariſes from his own Falſe Maxims, and the Aggravation of his Pain, by the very Words in which he ſees her Innocence, makes a very pleaſant and inſtructive Satyr. The Character of *Horner*, and the Deſign of it, is a good Repreſentation of the Age in which that Comedy was written; at which Time, Love and Wenching were the Buſineſs of Life, and the Gallant Manner of purſuing Women, was the beſt Recommendation at Court. To which only it is to be imputed, that a Gentleman of Mr. *Wicherley*'s Character, and Senſe, condeſcends to repreſent the Inſults done to the Honour of the Bed, without juſt Reproof; but to have drawn a Man of Probity with Regard to ſuch Conſiderations, had been a Monſter, and a Poet had, at that Time, diſcover'd his Want of knowing the Manners of the Court he liv'd in by a virtuous Character, in his fine Gentleman, as he would ſhow his Ignorance, by drawing a Vitious One to pleaſe the preſent Audience. Mrs. *Bignall* did her Part very happily, and had a certain Grace in her Ruſticity, which gave us Hopes of ſeeing her a very Skilful Player, and in ſome Parts, ſupply our Loſs of Mrs. *Verbruggen*. I cannot be of the ſame Opinion with my Friends and Fellow-Labourers, the *Reformers of Manners*, in their Severity towards Plays, but muſt allow, that a good Play, acted before a well-bred Audience, muſt raiſe very proper Incitements to good Behaviour, and be the moſt quick and moſt prevailing Method of giving Young People a Turn of Senſe and Breeding. But as I have ſet up for a

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Weekly Hiſtorian, I reſolve to be a Faithful One; and therefore take this publick Occaſion, to admoniſh a Young Nobleman, who came fluſter'd into the Box laſt Night, and let him know, how much all his Friends were out of Countenance for him. The Women ſate in Terrour of hearing ſomething that ſhould ſhock their Modeſty, and all the Gentlemen in as much Pain, out of Compaſſion to the Ladies, and perhaps Reſentment for the Indignity which was offered in coming into their Preſence in ſo diſreſpectful a Manner. Wine made him ſay Nothing that was rude, therefore he is forgiven, upon Condition he will never hazard his offending more in this Kind. As I juſt now hinted, I own my ſelf of the Society for *Reformation of Manners*. We have lower Inſtruments than thoſe of the Family of *Bickerſtaff*, for puniſhing Great Crimes, and expoſing the Abandon'd. Therefore, as I deſign to have Notices from all publick Aſſemblies, I ſhall take upon me only Indecorums, Improprieties, and Negligences, in ſuch as ſhould give us better Examples. After this Declaration, if a Fine Lady thinks fit to giggle at Church, or a Great Beau come in drunk to a Play, either ſhall be ſure to hear of it in my enſuing Paper: For merely as a well-bred Man, I cannot bear theſe Enormities.

After the Play, we naturally ſtroll to this Coffee-houſe, in Hopes of meeting ſome new Poem, or other Entertainment, among the Men of Wit and Pleaſure, where there is a Dearth at preſent. But it is wonderful there ſhould be ſo few Writers, when the Art is become merely Mechanick, and Men may make themſelves Great that Way, by as certain, and infallible Rules, as you may be a Joyner or a Maſon. There happens a good Inſtance of this, in what the Hawker juſt now has offer'd to Sale; to wit, *Inſtructions to Vanderbank; A Sequel to the Advice to the Poets; a Poem, occaſioned by the Glorious Succeſs of her Majeſty's Arms, under the Command of the Duke of* Marlborough, *the laſt Year in* Flanders. Here you are to underſtand, that the Author finding the Poets would not take his Advice, he troubles himſelf no more about 'em; but has met with one *Vanderbank*, who works in Arras, and makes very good Tapeſtry Hangings: Therefore, in order to celebrate the Hero of the Age, he claps me together all that can be ſaid of a Man that makes Hangings: As,

Then, Artiſt, who doſt Nature's Face expreſs
In Silk and Gold, and Scenes of Action dreſs;
Doſt figured Arras animated leave,
Spin a bright Story, or a Paſſion weave
By mingling Threads; canſt mingle Shade and Light,
Delineate Triumphs, or deſcribe a Fight?

Well, What ſhall this Workman do? Why? To ſhow how great an Hero the Poet intends, he bids him give him a very good Horſe:

Champing his Foam, and bounding on the Plain,
Arch his high Neck, and graceful ſpread his Mane.

Now as to the Intrepidity, the calm Courage, the conſtant Application of the Hero, it is not neceſſary to take that upon your ſelf; you may, in the Lump, bid him you employ raiſe him as High as he can, and if he does it not, let him anſwer for diſobeying Orders.

Let Fame and Victory in inferior Sky,
Hover with ballanc'd Wings, and ſmiling fly,
Above his Head, &c.

A whole Poem of this Kind may be ready againſt an enſuing Campaign, as well as a Space left in the Canvaſs of a Piece of Tapeſtry for the principal Figure, whilſt the Under Parts are working: So that in Effect the Adviſer copies after the Man he pretends to direct. This Method ſhould, methinks, encourage young Beginners: For the Invention is ſo fitted to all Capacities, that by the Help of it a Man may make a Receipt for a Poem. A young Man may obſerve, that the Gigg of the Thing is, as I ſaid, finding out all that can be ſaid of his Way you employ to ſet forth your Worthy. *Waller* and *Denham* had worn out the Expedient of *Advice to a Painter*: This Author has transfer'd the Work, and ſent his *Advice to the Poets*; that is to ſay, to the *Turners of Verſe*, as he calls 'em. Well, that Thought is worn out alſo, therefore he directs his Genius to the Loom, and will have a new Set of Hangings, in Honour of the laſt Year in *Flanders*. I muſt own to you, I approve extremely of this Invention, and it might be improved for the Benefit of Manufactury: As, ſuppoſe an ingenious Gentleman ſhould write a Poem of Advice to a Calico-Printer: Do you think there is a Girl in *England*, that would wear any Thing but *The Taking of Liſle*, or *The Battle of Oudenard*? They would certainly be all the Faſhion, 'till the Heroes abroad had cut out ſome more Patterns. I ſhould fancy ſmall Skirmiſhes might do for Under-Petticoats, provided they had a Siege for the Upper. If our Adviſer were well imitated, many induſtrious People might be put to Work. Little Mr. *Ductile*, now in the Room, who formerly writ a Song and a half, is a Week gone in a very pretty Work, upon this Hint. He is writing an Epigram to a young Virgin who knits very well; 'tis a Thouſand Pities he is a *Jacobite*. But his Epigram is by Way of Advice to this Damſel, to knit all the Actions of the *Pretender* and the Duke of *Burgundy* laſt Campaign in the Clock of a Stocking. It were endleſs to enumerate the many Hands and Trades that may be employ'd by Poets, of ſo uſeful a Turn as this Adviſer's. I ſhall think of it; and in this Time of Taxes, ſhall conſult a great Critick employed in the Cuſtom-houſe, in order to propoſe what Tax may be proper to put upon Knives, Seals, Rings, Hangings, Wrought-Bells, Gowns and Petticoats, where any of thoſe Commodities bear Motto's, or are work'd upon Poetical Grounds.

St. James's Coffee-houſe, April 15.

Letters from *Turin* of the 3d Inſtant, *N. S.* inform us, That his Royal Highneſs employs all his Addreſs in alarming the Enemy, and perplexing their Speculations, concerning his real Deſigns the enſuing Campaign. Contracts are enter'd into with the Merchants of *Milan*, for a great Number of Mules to tranſport his Proviſions and Ammunition. His Royal Highneſs has order'd the Train of Artillery to be convey'd to *Suſa* before the 20th of the next Month. In the mean Time, all Accounts agree, that the Enemy are very backward in their Preparations, and almoſt incapable of defending themſelves againſt an Invaſion, by reaſon of the general Murmurs of their own People; which, they find, are no way to be quieted, but by giving them Hopes of a ſpeedy Peace. When theſe Letters were diſpatch'd, the Marſhal *de Theſſe* was arrived at *Genoa*, where he has taken much Pains to keep the Correſpondents of the Merchants of *France* in Hopes, that there will Meaſures be found out to ſupport the Credit and Commerce between that State and *Lyons*. But the late Declaration of the Agents of Monſieur *Bernard*, that they cannot diſcharge the Demands made upon 'em, has quite diſpirited all thoſe who are engaged in the Remittances of *France*.

From my own Apartment, April 15.

It is a very natural Paſſion in all good Members of the Common-wealth, to take what Care they can of their Families. Therefore I hope the Reader will forgive me, that I deſire he would go to the Play, call'd the *Stratagem*, this Evening, which is to be acted for the Benefit of my near Kinſman Mr. *John Bickerſtaff*. I proteſt to you, the Gentleman has not ſpoken to me to deſire this Favour; but I have a Reſpect for him, as well in Regard to Conſanguinity, as that he is an intimate Friend of that Famous and Heroick Actor, Mr. *George Powell*, who formerly play'd *Alexander the Great* in all Places, tho' he is lately grown ſo reſerv'd, as to act it only on the Stage.

LONDON: Printed for the Author, 1709.